

INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE CRISIS

Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance



United States
Diplomacy Center



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The simulations have no right or wrong actions or solutions because the process, rather than the end result, is the goal. The learning experience develops organically as the students engage in the simulation. Once the simulation has been completed, students are encouraged to express how their views on diplomacy have evolved as a result of the simulation, and to contemplate how they can apply diplomatic skills to their everyday lives.

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Reports of war and famine, religious and ethnic persecution resulting in the flow of refugees across international borders are all too common today. Whether the desperate individuals come from Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan or Somalia, we should all be moved by their tragic stories. Today you have the opportunity to experience the challenge of protecting a persecuted minority group and preventing another crisis of refugees from occurring.

In today's exercise you will be focusing on a minority group known as the Rubits in the fictitious country of Budan. The majority population in Budan is persecuting the Rubits for their religion. Many Rubits have fled as refugees across the border into the neighboring country of Gilbia. Gilbia and various international organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Association for Refugees and Minorities) are trying to provide shelter for the thousands of refugees, but the numbers have overwhelmed them. Your goal is to protect the Rubits, prevent the refugee emergency from escalating, and find a more permanent solution to the crisis.

We are now
witnessing the
highest levels of
displacement
on record.

-UNHCR

You will find as you try to resolve this humanitarian and human rights crisis that different players have different objectives. You will need to find common ground to prevent a further crisis and public outcry against the worsening refugee situation in Gilbia. The United States, other nations including the influential nation of Malil, and activists across the world are critical of the developing scenario in Gilbia and following events closely.

Are you willing to jump in and confront the situation? We believe you bring the necessary skills to the table: the ability to hear others' viewpoints; the ability to analyze your own and others' positions and goals; a spirit of cooperation; and a belief that everyone can be a part of a solution.

You will consider a number of actions:

- Identify steps to stop the flood of refugees from Budan into Gilbia;
- Prevent a humanitarian crisis in the refugee camps where Rubits who have fled Budan are now living in Gilbia;
- Suggest incentives to encourage better economic and political relations between the Governments of Budan and Gilbia;
- Through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, encourage other countries to accept more refugees;
- Protect minorities in the region, particularly in Budan;
- Reduce conflict—between the United States and Malil and between Gilbia and Budan.

As representatives of one of the stakeholders engaged in the process, you will need to:

- Prioritize your diplomatic goals according to your group's policy position.
- Identify with whom you will need to negotiate and who might be your allies/opponents.

You will need to learn what the other participants believe and what they want out of the negotiation. Can you help bridge gaps between the participants? Remember, not all groups will agree with your priorities or goals. The objective is to find a solution that advances your group's goals and priorities. To do this you will need to compromise and develop consensus to meet the other stakeholders halfway.

You will need to negotiate with other groups and look for ideas you share. Recognize where you can and cannot change your own and others' positions; identify areas of agreement; and finally agree on a strategy. You will have a worksheet to help organize your strategy. The country of Gilbia has invited a group of countries and organizations to discuss the situation within and on the borders of Gilbia and Budan. Representatives from Gilbia, Budan, the United States, Malil, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Association for Refugee and Minorities (ARM) will attend. There will be a Chair to call the meeting together and to moderate.

At the beginning of the first round of discussions and in the order listed above, each group will have three minutes to outline its concerns and objectives. Some ideas for your group's opening position are provided in your Stakeholder Profile; feel free to incorporate or withhold this information as you wish.

After all groups have given an opening statement you will be given 15 minutes to reach out to other participants and negotiate your positions informally. Your goal in this session should be to build alliances and offer strategies to find consensus with as many other groups as possible.

When you return to the formal meeting, the Chair will recognize delegates to hear their proposals. During this time you should look for support. Do not spend time endlessly debating; the goal is to find a workable solution to the crisis at hand. Listen to what others say and if you need to adjust your proposal, do so. The Chair will give you 15-20 minutes to come up with a resolution – or not.

An expert will then review the process and outcome with you, specifically highlighting how realistic your proposals were.

Today's simulation involves a hypothetical scenario but deals with the real world problem of refugees. You will role play a member of a delegation at an international meeting trying to negotiate a solution. The delegations are:



The Foreign Ministry of Gilbia



The Foreign Ministry of Budan



The U.S. Department of State



The Foreign Ministry of Malil

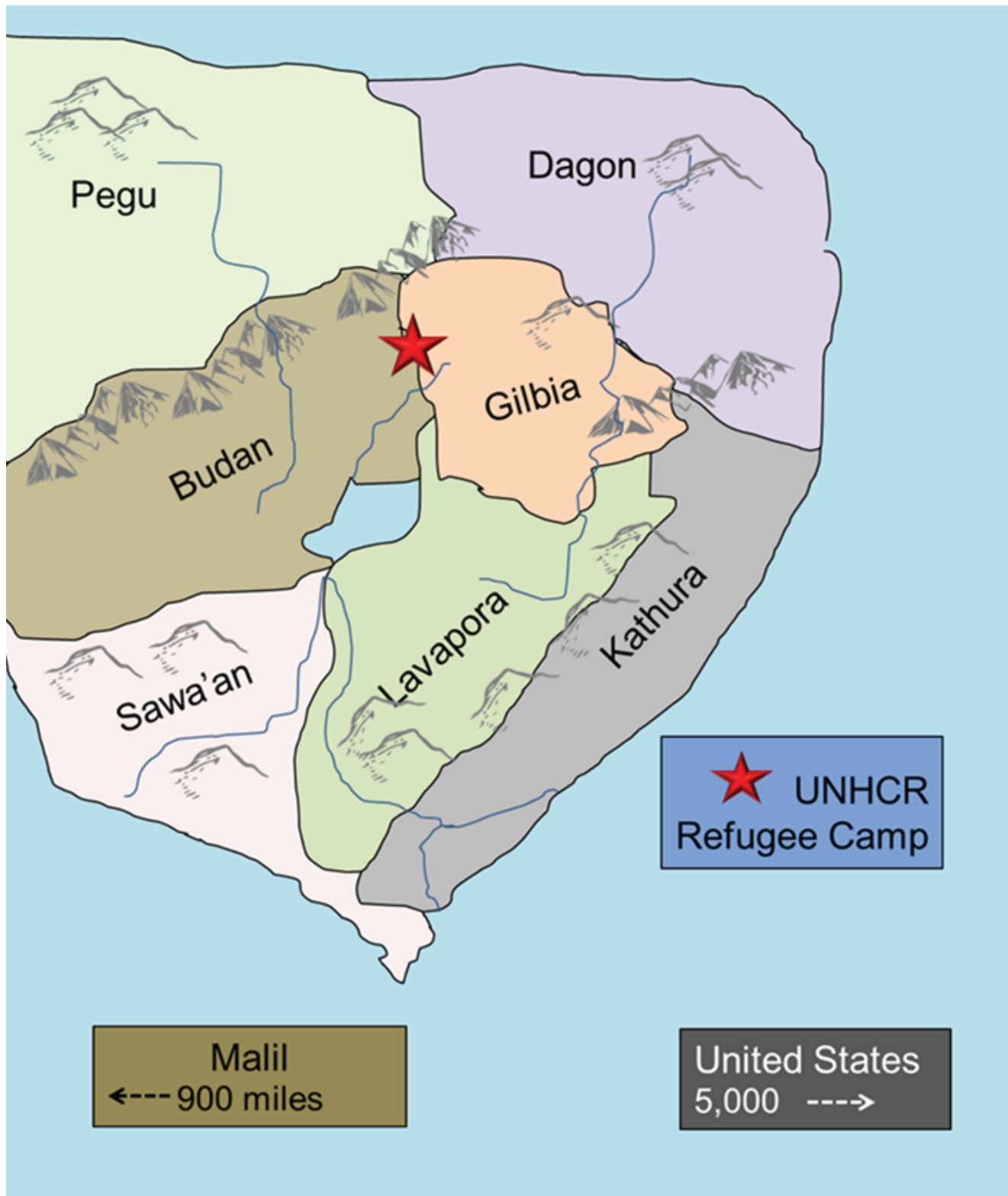


United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



Association for Refugees and Minorities

REFUGEE CRISIS MAP



The Government of Budan recently passed a law prohibiting the religion practiced by the Rubits, its minority citizens. This decision comes after the majority ethnic group in Budan, the Dannii, pressured the government into passing a series of harsh laws effectively beginning the exodus (departure) of the Rubits from Budan. Conflicts between the two communities have existed for years but simple intolerance has now turned into persecution. This persecution has caused Rubit activists and their families to leave behind their businesses and loved ones to cross into the neighboring country of Gilbia.

Economically, the Rubits are among the most successful groups in the country, and for the last five years their businesses have attracted numerous foreign investors. Rubit success is all the more noteworthy as Budan has placed high taxes on Rubit businesses and cut government funds for schools and development in areas with high Rubit populations.

Now, however, Rubit persecution has become even worse. A number of Rubit houses have been burned, and Rubit citizens are convinced that the government played a part. Proof, however, has yet to be established. Rubit religious leaders and successful members of the business community have been threatened by anonymous sources and several Rubit community leaders have gone missing in the past month. Last week the body of one such community leader was discovered hanging from a lamp post.

What began one month ago as a small number of Rubits crossing the border into neighboring Gilbia has since increased to more than 5,000 crossings last week. There are now approximately 10,000 refugees in Gilbian territory. In response to this migration, some within the Budanese government were (according to off-the-record statements) “happy to see [the Rubits] go.” Local media reporting in Gilbia has emphasized Budan’s majority population echoing these sentiments.

The number of Rubit refugees has now exceeded Gilbia’s ability to care for them. In response, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has set up camps totaling 2,000 tents (with a maximum capacity of four to a tent). These resources are being overrun by the influx of additional desperate refugees streaming in from Budan. There is not enough food; sanitation conditions remain terrible; and over fifty Rubit children have come down with measles in the last 48 hours. Additionally, UNHCR officials are preparing for the possibility of an outbreak of cholera within the camps.

Gilbian citizens are worried about crime and fear that refugees will begin to invade homes or that their children will catch diseases from the newcomers. Gilbia has repeatedly tried to work with Budan to find a solution to this problem. The Government of Budan has remained unresponsive.

The Association for Refugees and Minorities (ARM)

The Association for Refugees and Minorities (ARM) works to protect the lives of refugees around the world and needs to maintain support from all sides. ARM recognizes that given the immediacy of the crisis and current location of Rubit refugees, camps appropriately were set up in Gilbia. However, ARM does not see Gilbia as a permanent home for these individuals. In past crises Gilbia was only able to take in approximately 100 refugees for resettlement per year. In the current crisis, however, the number of Rubit refugees flooding into Gilbia could soon exceed 100,000 this year alone.

Budan and Gilbia

Relations between the authoritarian Budanese government and democratic Gilbia have always been difficult; the two countries have different cultures, political histories and economies. Their extensive and shared border has long been a source of tension rather than cooperation. The number of Budanese refugees in Gilbia is increasing now more than ever. Whatever their differences, both nations agree that some action must be taken immediately.

Malil

The country of Malil (located 900 miles west of Budan) is approximately the same size as the United States in terms of geographic area. Malil has a strong influence in the region and economic and political power worldwide, including a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. Budan has been in Malil's orbit of influence for many years and receives substantial foreign aid from Malil.

The United States Department of State (DOS)

The United States Department of State is the lead U.S. government agency responsible for conducting international relations according to the policies set by the President. The President appoints a Secretary of State who represents his or her foreign policies to other nations. The Department also advises various executive agencies and makes recommendations based on its relevant expertise. DOS advocates for freedom of religion around the world. The U.S. business community has large investments in Gilbia; trade is strong; and thousands of American jobs depend on that trade relationship.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Beyond setting up their current camp/tents for the refugees in Gilbia, the UNHCR is reluctant to do more. The UNHCR, like other United Nations agencies, is limited by its budget, and contributing member states are very concerned about costs. The UNHCR must justify every deployment and large expense, and this crisis could represent a huge expenditure of resources for many years to come. ARM has been a strong ally and partner of the UNHCR for decades, and the two groups have worked side-by-side in even the most dangerous of conditions.

Resettlement is a long process. Once refugees have moved out of a given country, a UNHCR team determines who qualifies for resettlement. It may take months--even years--and a great deal of documentation is required to determine if a refugee is eligible. Economic migrants (individuals fleeing for better job opportunities) are disqualified.

WORKSHEET 1: QUESTIONS TO THINK THROUGH

Whom do you represent?

What is your overall goal?

What goals (in priority order) would you also like to achieve?

Who can help you?

Who might oppose your approach?

What incentives and disincentives can you offer to persuade others?

What should be your strategy in dealing with the other parties, .i.e., with whom should you speak first?

Remember: There is no “right” or “wrong” outcome. This is not a debate in which you need to win the argument, your goal is to work together to find a workable solution. Build upon common ground and look for areas where you and other parties can agree. Where you disagree, try to create options to that address the other parties’ concerns.

WORKSHEET 2: POSSIBLE ACTIONS

The following points are possible actions to be taken. Prioritize your top two choices according to your delegation's policy position. Feel free to add actions. You will share your priorities with the other delegations in your opening statement.

- Identify steps to stop the flood of refugees from Budan into Gilbia;
- Prevent a humanitarian crisis in the refugee camps where Rubits who have escaped Budan are now living in Gilbia;
- Suggest incentives to encourage better economic and political relations between the Governments of Budan and Gilbia;
- Encourage other countries to accept additional refugees through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
- Protect minorities in the region and particularly in Budan;
- Reduce conflict—between the United States and Malil and between Gilbia and Budan.

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Clearly determine your position and reach consensus within your group on actions you propose.

- ▶ **Negotiate immediately** within your group if you see that you no longer have consensus.
- ▶ Clarify or re-state your position if one of the other stakeholder groups mis-represents it.
- ▶ If during informal discussions you decide your group should change its position, discuss it with the other group members as soon as possible so everyone stays on the same page.

Realistically evaluate the possible actions you propose before you propose them.

- ▶ Are the proposals **doable**?
- ▶ Will they **achieve** the results you want?
- ▶ Watch for **unintended consequences**.

Analyze the other stakeholders' positions.

- ▶ Why do they **hold** that position?
- ▶ Why do they **oppose** or support your proposals?
- ▶ Can you apply **pressure** to make stakeholders re-evaluate their positions?
- ▶ Can you offer any **incentives** to make stakeholders re-evaluate their positions?



Build alliances:

- ▶ **Identify** which stakeholders share your position, and which stakeholders do not.
- ▶ Don't spend all your time trying to persuade others. **Listen** carefully to other delegates and absorb what they are saying.
- ▶ Try to identify **common interests** you share with stakeholders who oppose your position.
- ▶ Try to identify **common concerns** you share.
- ▶ What do you actually agree on with another stakeholder even if your end conclusion is different?

Incentives and Disincentives (carrots and sticks):

- ▶ If you think another stakeholder group wants something that you can provide, even if not connected to the issue at hand, offer it to them. This may make them more willing to see your points.

Explain the negative consequences for the other stakeholder group if it does not do things your way. That cost may not be directly connected to the issue at hand.

Who is a refugee?

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

Who is an internally displaced person?

An internally displaced person (IDP) is a person who has been forced to flee his or her home for the same reason as a refugee, but remains in his or her own country and has not crossed an international border. Unlike refugees, IDPs are not protected by international law or eligible to receive many types of aid. As the nature of war has changed in the last few decades, with more and more internal conflicts replacing wars among countries, the number of IDPs has increased significantly.

A returnee is a refugee who has returned to his or her home country. The majority of refugees prefer to return home as soon as it is safe to do so, after a conflict and the country is being rebuilt. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) encourages voluntary repatriation, or return, as the best solution for displaced people. The agency often provides transportation and other assistance, such as money, tools and seeds. Occasionally, UNHCR helps rebuild homes, schools and roads.

Who is a stateless person?

A stateless person is someone who is not a citizen of any country. Citizenship is the legal bond between a government and an individual, and allows for certain political, economic, social and other rights of the individual, as well as the responsibilities of both government and citizen. A person can become stateless due to a variety of reasons, including sovereign, legal, technical or administrative decisions or oversights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights underlines that “Everyone has the right to a nationality.”

Who is an asylum seeker?

When people flee their own country and seek sanctuary in another country, they apply for asylum – the right to be recognized as a refugee and receive legal protection and material assistance. An asylum seeker must demonstrate that his or her fear of persecution in his or her home country is well-founded.

What is the 1951 Refugee Convention?

The 1951 Geneva Convention is the main international instrument of refugee law. The Convention clearly spells out who a refugee is and the kind of legal protection, other assistance and social rights he or she should receive from the countries who have signed the document. The Convention also defines a refugee’s obligations to host governments and certain categories or people, such as war criminals, who do not qualify for refugee status. The Convention was limited to protecting mainly European refugees in the aftermath of World War II, but another document, the 1967 Protocol, expanded the scope of the Convention as the problem of displacement spread around the world.

Source: UNHCR, What is a refugee

Foreign Ministry of Gilbia



Background: The democratic country of Gilbia shares an extensive border (1,385 miles) with the country of Budan. The countries were never allies and have fought often about their border. Gilbia's economy has been healthy for the last decade because of its strong service sector (banks, financial companies) and information technology (IT) fields. But the 2008 worldwide recession has hit Gilbia hard, causing high unemployment and a large deficit in the national budget. The 2,000 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)-sponsored refugee tents in the west of the country are putting a strain on resources and making the people of Gilbia angry. The press is also criticizing Budanese refugees and blaming them for an increase in crime and disease. Gilbia is a member of the United Nations and enjoys a strong relationship with the United States. Over the last decade, the U.S. has invested billions of dollars into the Gilbian economy which has strengthened the relationship between the two nations. The flood of refugees arriving from Budan however threatens to undo these valuable investments and may cripple the Gilbian economy for a generation.

Opening Position:

Gilbia has asked for a meeting among relevant parties to be held to determine how to halt the flow of the thousands of refugees crossing into Gilbia from Budan. Gilbia is seeking a solution to the crisis and U.S. sanctions leveled against Budan for persecuting the Rubits. Gilbia will accuse Budan of persecuting the Rubits for their religion and for creating the crisis in the first place. Gilbia will therefore demand that Budan take the lead in addressing the refugee status of its own BudaneseRubit citizens and point out that Budan has the economic strength to do so. Gilbia will also accuse Budan of using the Rubit's religion as an excuse to punish them for their economic success.

Negotiation Strategy:

- Consider your short and long-term goals regarding the Rubit migration into your nation. Is a short-term stopgap solution enough?
- If achievable, what other agreements with Budan and the other stakeholders might address the refugee crisis and benefit your nation in the long run?
- How can you provide shelters and protection for refugee Rubits in your country given limited national resources?
- What are the objectives of the other stakeholders? How can you use those objectives to achieve your own goals?

Association for Refugees and Minorities (ARM)



Background: The U.S. Department of State (the equivalent of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs) is responsible for conducting international relations according to the policy set by the President of the United States. The U.S. President appoints the Secretary of State, who represents his or her foreign policies to other nations. The United States considers the region surrounding Budan and Gilbia to be of strategic and therefore special concern. Stability in this region is critical to U.S. interests.

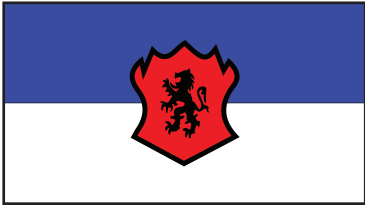
The United States has had relations with both Budan and Gilbia for over a century but the U.S. relationship with Gilbia has always been warmer. Budan in contrast remains closer to the influential nation of Malil. The U.S. has moderately staffed embassies in both countries, as the number of American citizens living in Budan or Gilbia is small. The United States is a member of the United Nations and is one of the Permanent Five (Perm5) members of the Security Council. The U.S. is also the biggest donor to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), contributing 793 million USD in 2012. Additionally, the United States has accepted more people for resettlement than any other country in the world.

The U.S. Congress has remained unwilling to pass the President's budget and as a result, local agencies who handle refugee resettlement programs have almost closed for lack of funds. Non-governmental organizations (the Association for Refugee and Minorities [ARM] included) continue to run heart-wrenching television ads showing Rubit refugees and appealing to Americans and their government's responsibility to defend religious minorities. Members of Congress, pressured by Dannii and Rubit immigrant populations in their districts, are beginning to raise the issue. The White House is attempting to take the political temperature of the American electorate, particularly on the freedom of religion issue.

Over the last decade, the United States has invested billions of dollars into the Gilbian economy, which has strengthened the relationship between the two nations. The new flood of Rubitrefugees crossing over into Gilbia however threatens the strength of the Gilbian economy, the investments of the United States, and stability in the region.

Opening Position: The United States will defend the right to religious freedom and criticize Budan for persecuting the Rubits. The President and Secretary of State have given your team great leeway in supporting the refugees as you see fit, citing both American financial support for the UNHCR and acceptance of refugees from around the world. The U.S. will note that the region including Budan and Gilbia is currently under great internal strain and should not become an area for further conflict between the external powers (i.e. Malil and the U.S.).

Foreign Ministry of Malil



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Foreign Ministry of Malil, cont...

Negotiation Strategy:

- How should the Department of State react to the concerns of Budan and Gilbia, the ARM and the UNHCR? The U.S. has significant interests and partnerships with all groups as well as other concerns around the globe.
- How can you encourage better economic and political relations between the Governments of Budan and Gilbia while protecting minority groups at the same time?
- How many refugees are you willing to accept given that the United States has already taken in approximately 70,000 refugees this past year and processing takes on average 18-24 months?
- Finally, Malil (a close ally of Budan and Security Council member) almost always opposes the United States in the geopolitical arena. The relationship is complex and needs to be managed with care.

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Foreign Ministry of Budan



Background: The authoritarian government of Budan has been in power for decades. It is made up entirely of the country's majority ethnic group, the Dannii. The Dannii have their own culture and religion and do not accept the religion of the minority Rubits, who represent less than 20% of the country's population. The Rubits, who are among the original peoples of Budan, are from a different ethnic group and have a distinct culture and religion. Even though they are politically disadvantaged, the Rubits have been very successful economically. Conflicts between the two communities have existed for years but the Rubits are now being overtly persecuted because of their religion.

This persecution has caused many Rubit families to flee the country of Budan, leaving behind their businesses and families, to seek safety in the neighboring country of Gilbia. This migration has been the unspoken goal of the government of Budan for many years. The Budanese government justifies its taxation of the Rubits by claiming Rubits use unfair business practices that allow them to dominate key sectors of the valuable Information Technology (IT) sector and as a result become far wealthier than others in Budan.

Budan and Gilbia have a long history of disputes over their shared 1,385-mile border which has made their political relationship very tense. Budan is much larger in terms of geography and population, economy and Gross National Product (GNP) thanks to its industry, agriculture and information technology sectors. The country of Budan is a member of the United Nations and relies on the much more powerful Permanent Security Council Member Malil for economic and political support.

Opening Position:

Budan will rebut (go against) Gilbia's complaint that it is persecuting the Rubits and forcing them to cross the border into Gilbia. Budan will argue that it is not treating the Rubits any differently from its other citizens and that it has the right, like all nations, to conduct its internal affairs as it sees fit. Budan will further question the presence of the United States at these negotiations as it has no direct interests at stake in their outcome. Budan will dispute the ability of any nation or organization to interfere in its internal affairs.

Foreign Ministry of Budan, cont...

Negotiation Strategy:

- What elements of the status quo benefit your government? What does not?
- What might incentivize your government to change its policies towards the Rubits? If an agreeable alternative/incentive is presented, what must it contain?
- What are the objectives of the other stakeholders? How can you use those objectives to achieve your own goals? (e.g., encouraging other players to accept refugees while minimizing their presence elsewhere in the scenario)
- Much depends on whether the Rubits crossing into Gilbia should be defined as “refugees” and whether your government even considers this scenario and treatment of its minority citizens to be problematic.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)



Background: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The UNHCR coordinates international action to protect refugees and acts as a global leader in resolving refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees and works to make sure that citizens of all nations can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safety in another country if the need arises. Under international law, refugees have the right to return to their home nation, become a part of the community to which they have fled, or move to another country.

Because so many Rubits (10,000) left Budan so suddenly the government of Gilbia was not able to respond adequately. Therefore the UNHCR and its partners moved life-saving emergency assistance such as clean water, health care resources, as well as shelter materials (tents) into the west of Gilbia at the relevant border area. Among the relief items are blankets, sleeping mattresses, household goods and food. The UNHCR can provide refugee registration, assistance and advice on asylum applications, education and counseling. Conditions, however, are far from ideal. Supplies are limited, the rain and other extreme weather never stop and the refugees remain in miserable living conditions.

Opening Position: The UNHCR will state its concerns about the refugees currently in Gilbia, note that it has brought in only 2,000 tents and emergency supplies and inform all parties that its resources are at capacity. It will remind all stakeholders that refugees continue to cross the Gilbian-Budanese border in large numbers and that the UNHCR cannot resolve this crisis alone. The UNHCR will therefore ask the countries of the world, and especially UN Security Council members, to make additional pledges of donations, emergency supplies, personnel, equipment, and vaccines to enable the UNHCR to respond effectively to this humanitarian crisis.

Negotiation Strategy:

- How can you convince other nations to contribute their resources in resolving this crisis? What are the objectives of the other stakeholders? How can you use those objectives to achieve your own goals?
- In what ways can you act as a neutral party to resolve conflicts between rival stakeholders while achieving your primary goal of protecting the refugees?
- Your primary objective in the early rounds of negotiation should be to provide immediate care and relief supplies for those refugees currently in Gilbia.
- In later rounds, determine if your more long-term priorities (where refugees in Gilbia can be relocated, how to stop the flow of refugees, protection for the Rubit within Budan) can be negotiated.
- Remember that a partial solution, however seemingly unsatisfactory, is preferable to no solution at all.

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